

NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



FALLEN HERO BRIDGE DEDICATIONS

During this past week, South Dakota dedicated three Fallen Hero Bridges. Bridges dedicated were honoring PVT Richard Bertram, PFC Robert Rand, and CPT Charles Lane, Jr.

South Dakota HWY 183 Bridge, which spans the Keya Paha River, honors PVT Bertram of Colome who was killed in action on Okinawa Island in Japan in 1945 while serving with Company C, 382nd Infantry.





South Dakota HWY 42 Bridge north of Monroe over the East Fork of the Vermillion River pays tribute to PFC Rand who was born near Monroe and was killed in action October 3, 1951 near Chorwon, Korea. Rand died from a direct mortar shell hit in one of the hardest fought battles of the Korean War while on duty in the region of Heartbreak Ridge.

South Dakota HWY 81 Bridge north of Yank-

ton over

the James River was dedicated to CPT Lane. Lane was raised in Tabor and in 1965 enlisted in the United States Air Force to fulfill his dream of being a pilot. In 1967, he was sent to Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base. He was on his 92nd mission when he was shot down ten miles north of Hanoi on August 23, 1967.



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RIVER CITIES PUBLIC TRANSIT RECEIVES SDDVA 2021 PARTNER OF THE YEAR AWARD

River Cities Public Transit, based in Pierre, has been named the 2021 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Partner of the Year. RCPT was recognized at SDDVA's annual benefit conference Monday, Aug. 16, in Pierre.

What started with American Legion Post 20 in Fort Pierre's application for a United States Department of Veterans Affairs Highly Rural Transportation Grant has grown into an unbelievable partnership that has benefitted South Dakota's veterans in over 34 counties.

After receiving the original grant, Post 20 partnered up with River Cities Public Transit to provide the needed transportation for veterans to and from their medical appointments, and together they have grown an unbelievable service for veterans and their families.

"RCPT has a legacy of cooperation, dedication, commitment, and building partnerships," said Secretary Greg Whitlock of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "They explored new horizons, created new boundaries, and achieved goals that have assisted veterans in over 34 counties."

The team at RCPT has also volunteered their transportation services to veterans attending State Fair recognitions, as well as transporting veterans and their families to and from the re-

cent ribbon cutting ceremony at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery.

"This award is a testament to the power and collaboration of a great partner," said Whitlock. "As long as we continue to work together and support each other, we will continue to do amazing things for our veterans."

TODD ROSE RECEIVES 2021 SDDVA NEW VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Todd Rose of Watertown has been named the 2021 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs New Veterans Service Officer of the Year. Rose was recognized by his peers at SDDVA's annual benefit conference Monday, Aug. 16, in Pierre.

Rose, county veterans service officer for Codington County, was recognized for his desire to acquire and absorb information to assist his veterans and for his outstanding ability to communicate with veterans and their families.

"Todd has the combination of persistence, passion, and resilience," said Greg Whitlock, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "As a new veterans service officer, he pushes to achieve new goals, try new components, focus on understanding the entire VA process, explore new challenges, and find direct solutions."

Rose's office serves over 2,100 veterans in Codington County.



AARON POLLARD RECEIVES 2021 SDDVA OUTSTANDING LEADER, MENTOR, ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR WARD

Aaron Pollard of Sioux Falls has been named the 2021 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Outstanding Leader, Mentor, Advocate of the Year. Pollard was recognized by his peers at SDDVA's annual benefit conference Monday, Aug. 16, in Pierre.

Pollard joined the SDDVA team in 2006 and currently serves as the Department's deputy secretary.

"Aaron was instrumental in securing funding and constructing the new South Dakota Veterans Cemetery, along with his numerous other duties," said Greg Whitlock, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "Some of his most important qualities are his sense of responsibility, ownership, and his dependability. He was instrumental in creating the vision for the cemetery and executed the project from start to finish. Even with a few bumps in the road, he still persisted and delivered a beautiful veterans cemetery that the state can be very proud of."



JERRY LEMME RECEIVES 2021 SDDVA OUTSTANDING DEPARTMENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

Jerry Lemme of Dell Rapids has been named the 2021 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Outstanding Department Staffer of the Year. Lemme was recognized by his peers at SDDVA's annual benefit conference Monday, Aug. 16, in Pierre.

Lemme joined the SDDVA team in 2015 and serves as a state veterans service officer in the SDDVA Claims Office in Sioux Falls.

"Jerry is very genuine when he interacts with veterans and their families, staff, and county and tribal veterans service officers," said Greg Whitlock, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "He is a great problem solver, mentor, and subject matter expert on pension, policies, and procedures. He stays informed on all of the ever-changing federal rules and regulations and shares his knowledge with all partners within the Department. He exemplifies integrity, knowledge and motivation; a work ethic that is highly desirable and appreciated in our network."



DAN CULLEN NAMED OUTSTANDING VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Dan Cullen of Hot Springs has been named the 2021 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs "Outstanding Veterans Service Officer of the Year." Cullen was recognized by his peers at SDDVA's annual benefit conference Monday, Aug. 16, in Pierre.

Dan Cullen, veterans service officer for Fall River County, was acknowledged for his success in winning appeals for veterans, his advocacy for veterans, his ability to build relationships with partners within the veteran network, and his willingness to mentor new members of the team.

"Dan has grit and is a marathoner," said Greg Whitlock, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "He faces challenges with determination and strives to achieve the best outcome for veterans.

Cullen's office serves over 800 veterans in Fall River County, as well as numerous veterans visiting the VA Black Hills Health Care System.





SDDVA ANNUAL CVSO SCHOOL

Last week, county and tribal veterans service officers met in Pierre for SDDVA's annual benefit school. The two and a half days of training focused on benefits and services for veterans and their families.

In addition to the scheduled speakers, attendees were afforded the chance to hear messages from Governor Kristi Noem, Lt. Governor Larry Rhoden, SDNG Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette and Vietnam Veteran Ken Korkow.

During their business meeting, the CTVSOs





elected leaders to their executive board. Officers are posted below.

Thirty-one vendors hosted booths during vendor night on Tuesday, August 17. During vendor night, SDDVA staff and CTVSOs raised \$600 in support of Midwest Honor Flight.

SDVSO Association	Name	Office Phone
President	Aaron Walberg (Brown County)	605.626.7129
Secretary/Treasurer	Fred Kuil (Douglas County)	605.724.2750
Vice President	Craig Bennett (Davison, Sanborn, and Jerauld Counties)	605.995.8619
Judge Advocate	Dennis Evenson (Deuel County)	605.874.2111
District I Representative	Courtney VanZanten (Brookings County)	605.696.8260
District II Representative	Samantha Boshard (McPherson County)	605.282.9227
District III Representative	Cody Mangold (Yankton County)	605.260.4420
District IV Representative	Jesse Ketzer (Lawrence County)	605.578.9748
District V Representative	Geri Opsal (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate)	605.698.3388

VA SPOTLIGHTS SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR ELDERLY WARTIME VETERANS

As a follow up to National Financial Awareness Day, Aug. 14, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs is launching an awareness campaign to inform elderly wartime veterans and their families of their lesser-known pension, funeral, burial, and survivor benefits.

"The VA's pension benefit helps veterans and their families cope with financial challenges by providing supplemental income," said Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy. "Currently, only 189,800 wartime veterans and 139,800 surviving spouses are using their needs-based pension benefits that are meant to ease the burden on them, their families and caregivers. We need to ensure all of our wartime veterans and their survivors are aware of their benefits."

The following benefits are available through VA's <u>Pension and Fiduciary Service</u> for use in planning and preparing for the future. VA <u>pension</u> is payable to wartime veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to non-service connected disability, or who are age 65 years old or older, and who meet certain income and net worth limits.

Special monthly pension is an additional benefit for Veterans in receipt of pension who are housebound, require the aid and attendance of another person to help them with daily activities (such as eating, bathing and dressing), have very limited eyesight or require nursing home care. For surviving spouses, there are two types of benefits P&F Service offers. Survivors Pension provides monthly payments to qualified surviving spouses and unmarried dependent children of wartime Veterans who meet certain income and net worth limits. Special monthly pension is also available to surviving spouses who are housebound or require the aid and attendance of another person. Dependency and Indemnity Compensation is available to dependents and parents and generally is not based on income and assets (except the income limits apply to parents). DIC is a monthly monetary benefit paid to a surviving spouse, child or parent of a Veteran who died from a service-related injury or illness, or when an active-duty service member dies in the line of duty. Special monthly DIC is also available to surviving spouses who are housebound or require the aid and attendance of another person.

A surviving spouse of a veteran who served on a Blue Water Navy vessel offshore of the Republic of Vietnam, or on another U.S. Navy or Coast Guard ship operating in the coastal waterways of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975, may be eligible for DIC benefits — even if they were previously denied. VA's funeral and burial benefits are available for both service-related and non-service-related deaths. New regulations allow a flat-rate burial and plot or interment allowance with decreased paperwork and maximum payment permitted by law.

For those interested in burial benefits such as a Presidential Memorial Certificate, burial flag, headstone or marker, the <u>National Cemetery Administration</u> has information about pre-need eligibility. Many vulnerable senior wartime veterans are targeted with misinformation. In many cases, this is because they are not fully aware of their benefits, which increases the chances of them being taken advantage of and/or defrauded.

SIOUX FALLS VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM DRIVE THRU FLU CLINICS

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System and CBOCs have scheduled drive thru flu clinics through October. Sioux Falls will also have COVID Vaccines available. The flu clinics will have egg free vaccines available for those allergic to the standard flu vaccine.

Sioux Falls Flu & Vaccine Clinic dates and times:

September 22 from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm October 2 from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm October 8 from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm October 13 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm October 19 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm October 28 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

CBOC Flu Clinics (no COVID Vaccines at these clinic times):

Aberdeen—October 5 and October 26
Dakota Dunes—October 1 and October 22
Watertown—October 15 and October 22
Wagner—October 15 and October 29
Spirit Lake—October 15 and October 28

VA GRANTS TO IMPROVE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING, PREVENT VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs will begin awarding \$116.4 million in grants Sept. 30 to more than 200 community organizations under VA's <u>Grant and Per Diem program</u>.

GPD provides funding to community organizations that provide transitional housing and supportive services for veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness and aims to help them achieve residential stability, increase skill levels and income, and obtain greater self-determination.

"The Grant and Per Diem program is integral to VA's evidence-based approach to preventing and ending homelessness among veterans, which remains one of our highest priorities," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "These grants give the Department continued flexibility to customize our services to the unique circumstances and needs of each veteran facing a housing crisis and puts them on the pathway to permanent and stable housing."

The VA will award three different types of grants to address the unique needs of veterans who are experiencing or at risk for homelessness.

- Capital Grants will provide funding for community organizations to build or renovate facilities that serve veterans experiencing homelessness and are authorized through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act established in 2020. The improvements must result in less congregate and more individual unit style housing, thereby improving personal safety and reducing risks associated with close quarters living. The VA will award 60 capital grants totaling approximately \$64.2 million to provide 1,439 new beds over the next 18 to 24 months.
- Case Management Grants will be used to support case managers who provide services to help veterans maintain self-sufficiency and housing stability. A total of 121 grants to organizations are awarded to support almost 155 case managers, totaling about \$28.4 million over two years.
- Special Need Grants will provide funding for community organizations that help veterans experiencing
 homelessness with special needs such as women veterans, those with chronic mental illnesses and those
 who care for minor dependents. A total of 26 grants to organizations will be awarded for 217 beds totaling about \$23.75 million over three years.

GPD has provided veterans experiencing homelessness with community-based transitional housing and supportive services since 1994. As a result of this program and other VA efforts, the number of veterans experiencing homelessness in the U.S. has declined by 50% since 2010.

VETERANS DAY AT THE SOUTH DAKOTA STATE FAIR

At the request of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, Governor Kristi Noem has proclaimed Thursday, September 2, 2021, as Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair, calling on all South Dakotans to honor those men and women who fought bravely for our freedoms.

At 10:30 a.m. on Sept. 2, the South Dakota State Fair will host a "Salute to Veterans" program on the Northwestern Energy Freedom Stage. South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Greg Whitlock will serve as the keynote speaker.

"Whether in peace or at war, the important role of our veterans cannot be denied. They are men and women from all walks of life that have one thing in common – a love for this great country," said Secretary

Whitlock. "No matter where or when veterans have served, they've always served with distinction and their service to this country is a bridge that was built on courage, dedication and patriotism."

Representatives from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans service organizations, as well as county veterans service officers will have informational booths in the Veterans Building on Flag Avenue throughout the Fair.



Veterans are encouraged to stop by the building and learn more about benefits and programs available to them.

Whitlock especially encourages Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans to stop by and visit with SDDVA staff about disability benefits. Veterans who served as far as 12 nautical miles from the shore of Vietnam, or who had service in the Korean Demilitarized Zone, are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides, such as Agent Orange, and may be entitled to service connection for numerous conditions related to herbicide exposure.

To show appreciation for their service, veterans and active military personnel will receive free gate admission, sponsored by Rowse Rakes, on Sept. 2.

In addition to the Salute to Veterans program, the Red Wilk Construction American Hero Award program will be held during the bull riding Sept. 1 and 2. Since 2013, more than 100 Veterans from all over South Dakota have been honored.

Visit https://www.sdstatefair.com/ for more information on the State Fair.



"Salute To Veterans" Thursday, September 2- 10:30 AM NorthWestern Energy Freedom Stage

Master of Ceremonies ~ Mike Vehle

Posting of Colors

Pledge of Allegiance

National Anthem ~ Terasa Gillen

Opening Prayer ~ Julian Burgess

Wagon Wheel Cowboy Church

Speaker:

Secretary Greg Whitlock - SD Department of Veterans Affairs

Special Music ~ Terasa Gillen

Special Guest:

Lieutenant Governor Larry Rhoden

Chet Sorenson Veteran of the Year Award

God Bless America ~ Everyone

Retiring of the Colors

Dismissal of the Troops

God Bless America,
Land that I love.
Stand beside her, and guide her
Thru the night with a light from above.
From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans, white with foam
God bless America, My home sweet home.



MICHAEL J. FITZMAURICE STATE VETERANS HOME UPDATE



Congratulations to Raven Rush and Karla Parisien on being the first recipients of the Reinert Inheritance & VA Nursing Grant provided by Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. Raven recently passed her boards to become an LPN and Karla will be taking her boards soon.

Congratulations also to Rachelle Butler who graduated with her Masters in Nursing!





POW/MIA DISPLAY TO BE DEDICATED AT STATE CAPITOL

Veterans will gather at the State Capitol in Pierre Friday, September 17, for the dedication of the POW/MIA Display. The display was created, funded, and donated by Rolling Thunder Inc—Chapter 2 of South Dakota.

The dedication ceremony will be held at 2:00 pm (CT) on the west end of the second floor of the Capitol. Invited guest speakers include: Lt. Governor Larry Rhoden, SDDVA Secretary Greg Whitlock, SDNG Adjutant General, Major General Jeff Marlette, members of South Dakota Congressional delegation, Rolling Thunder leadership, and POW/MIA family members.

UNITED HOMEFRONT-MITCHELL

Connecting Military Families to build up their Support Circles

Sept. 9th 5-8*pm Mitchell @ VFW Post 2750

(215 N Main St)

Event held upstairs -Use back entrance-elevator to the right Food & Beverages provided by the VFW Auxiliary

Children welcome-- activities provided
*please feel free to join us later as your schedule allows

WHAT IS UNITED HOMEFRONT?

An event designed to bring geographically dispersed military families & friends together to make new connections & friendships, to build up their military support circles, and strengthen their resiliency.

WHO IS THIS EVENT FOR?

All military families, friends, supporters, military members-current, prior service & retired, veteran & military organizations, and community members who want to support military families

Find more information on the "South Dakota Service Member & Family Support"

Facebook page within the "SD United Homefront - Mitchell" Group.

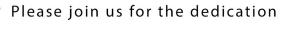
Direct RSVPs and Questions to
Ruth Ragels 605.877.2517 or Christian Johnson 605.415.0471

Brought to you by the South Dakota National Guard Service Member & Family Support Program

CRAZY HORSE MEMORIAL®

112151 AVENUE OF THE CHIEFS CRAZY HORSE, SD 57730-8900

POW/MIA CHAIR OF HONOR DEDICATION Friday, September 3, 2021 At 1 PM



of this meaningful memorial

The POW/MIA National

Chair of Honor

In The Native American

Educational And Cultural

Center® next to the

Code Talker exhibit





THIS EMPTY CHAIR WILL SERVE AS AN INSTANT REMINDER OF ALL THE SACRIFICES MADE FOR 'OUR COUNTRY' BY THESE STILL MISSING AMERICAN SERVICEMEN, OVER 81,000, WHO HAVE FOR TOO LONG

BEEN FORGOTTEN BY ALL BUT THEIR

IMMEDIATE FAMILIES AND CLOSE FRIENDS

"YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN"

VA EXPANDS RENTAL SUPPORT, INCREASING HOUSING OPTIONS FOR VETERANS

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has expanded the Shallow Subsidy initiative and will grant \$200 million to 238 nonprofit organizations across the country and territories to provide housing rental assistance to extremely and very low-income veteran households eligible under VA's <u>Supportive Services</u> for Veteran Families program.

The initiative funded by The American Rescue Plan, is now available in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam and promotes long-term housing stability by providing rental assistance payments directly to landlords on behalf of eligible veteran households for up to two years.

"The VA's Shallow Subsidy initiative is a vital tool in addressing the widening gap between incomes and rising housing costs," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "The recent expansion enables the VA to provide

relief to many more veterans burdened by high housing rental costs while they attempt to increase their incomes by pursuing training or better employment opportunities."

The SSVF Shallow Subsidy initiative covers 35% of eligible veterans' rent for two years without the risk of the subsidy decreasing if the veteran's income increases during the two-year period. The purpose is to incentivize veterans to increase their income through employment or other means. The initiative also works closely with the Labor Department's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program to help Veterans secure employment.



There are 7.2 million more affordable housing units needed for low-income families according to data published by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, highlighting the need for this VA initiative, particularly in communities with high rental costs and low housing rental vacancy rates.

The Shallow Subsidy initiative aligns with the White House's priority to promote housing stability by supporting vulnerable tenants and preventing foreclosures.

Click here to learn more about VA's mission to end Veteran homelessness and how you can help.



the ALLIANCE CorTrust Mortgage
South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance, Inc.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Aug 30—Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—PVT Bruce Ruby—Scherr Howe Event Center (212 Main Street)— Mobridge—10:30 am (CT)
- Sep 2-6—South Dakota State Fair—Huron
- Sep 2—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair
- Sep 2—Salute to Veterans Program at the SD State Fair—Freedom Stage—10:30 am (CT)
- Sep 3—POW/MIA Chair Dedication—Crazy Horse Memorial (112151 Avenue of the Chiefs)—1:00 pm (MT)
- Sep 4—727th/DAV Annual Poker Run—Swiftel Center (824 32nd Avenue)—Brookings
- Sep 6—State Offices Closed
- Sep 10—VABHHCS Veterans Stand Down—The Monument's Rushmore (Halls C & D)—444 Mt. Rushmore Road—Rapid City—1:00 pm—5:00 pm (MT)
- Sep 10—VABHHCS We Remember 9/11 20th Commemoration—The Monument's Rushmore (Halls C & D)—444 Mt. Rushmore Road—Rapid City—5:00 pm (MT)
- Sep 10—VABHHCS Veterans Recovery Concert—The Monument's Rushmore (Halls C & D)—444 Mt. Rushmore Road—Rapid City—6:30 pm (MT)
- Sep 11—Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—1LT Herbert Lyman and T/SGT James Lyman—Thunder Hawk American Legion Post—Thunder Hawk—10:00 am (MT)
- Sep 11—Patriot Day Celebration—420 Villa Drive—Box Elder—2:30 pm (MT)
- Sep 17—POW/MIA Chair of Honor Dedication—State Capitol—2:00 pm (CT)
- Sep 18—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 7
- Sep 18—Midwest Honor Flight Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—9:15 pm (CT)

 Doors Open at 7:30 pm (CT)
- Sep 22-23—DAV and Auxiliary 14th District Fall Conference—DAV Headquarters—1519 W. 51st Street—Sioux Falls
- Sep 24—Veterans Stand Down—SD Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am—noon (CT)
- Sep 30—Folds of Honor Legacy Golf Tournament—Red Rock Golf Course—Rapid City



UPCOMING EVENTS (CONTINUED)

Oct 8—Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—CPT Elmer Rusch—Brookings

Oct 9— Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 8

Oct 9—Midwest Honor Flight Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—8:45 pm (CT)

Doors Open at 7:00 pm (CT)

Oct 11—State Office Closed

Oct 11—Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—SGT William Christensen—American Legion Post 194 (221 W. Main Street)—Parkston—1:00 pm (CT)

Oct 20—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—SD Military Heritage Alliance Building (1600 W. Russell)— Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)

Oct 23—Midwest Honor Flight Hangar Dance at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls

Nov 11—State Offices Closed

Nov 11—Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—SSG Gregory Wagner—Hanson High School (600 Juniper Street)— Alexandria—1:00 pm (CT)

Nov 13—Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair—Sturgis Community Center (1401 Lazelle Street)—12:00—3:00 pm (MT)

Nov 25-26—State Offices Closed

Dec 14—Governor's Budget Address

Dec 18—Wreaths Across America—South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)

Dec 24—State Offices Closed

Dec 31—State Offices Closed

2022

Jan 11—Governor's State of the State Address

Jun 12—Midwest Honor Flight Annual Honor Ride

Jul 18-23—National Veterans Golden Age Games—Sioux Falls

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer

South Dakota Department of the Military https://military.sd.gov/

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs https://vetaffairs.sd.gov

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